

**GRAPHIC
BIOGRAPHY**

Elvis

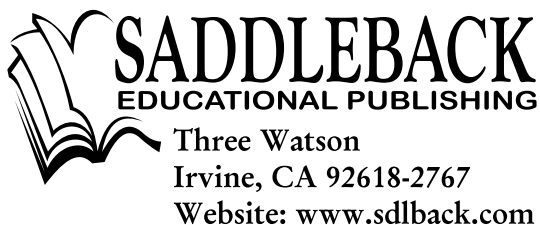
PRESLEY



Elvis Presley



Saddleback's Graphic Biographies



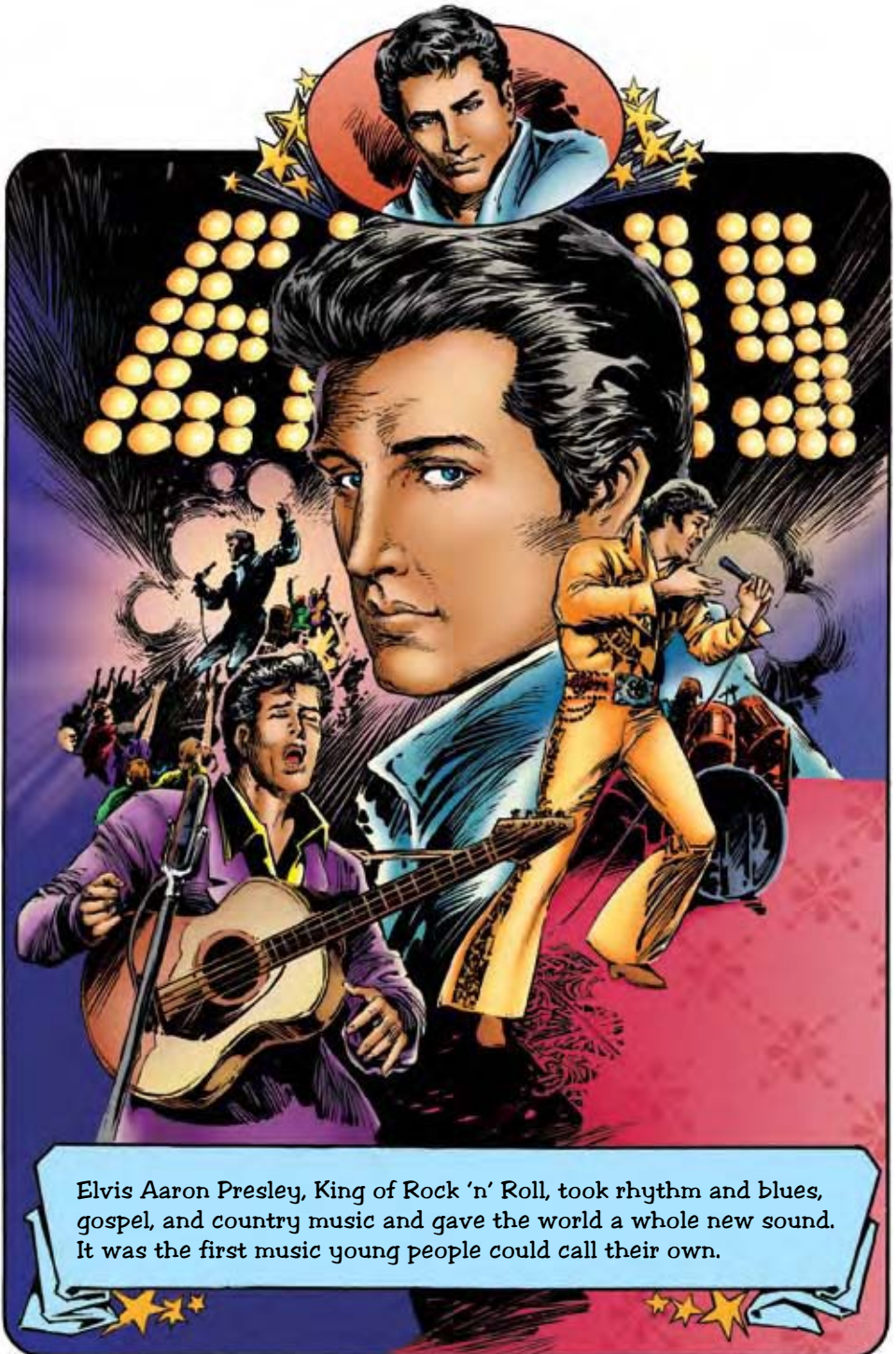
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Elvis Aaron Presley, King of Rock 'n' Roll, took rhythm and blues, gospel, and country music and gave the world a whole new sound. It was the first music young people could call their own.

Elvis Presley was born January 8, 1935, in Tupelo, Mississippi. His parents, Vernon and Gladys Presley, lived in a two room house.

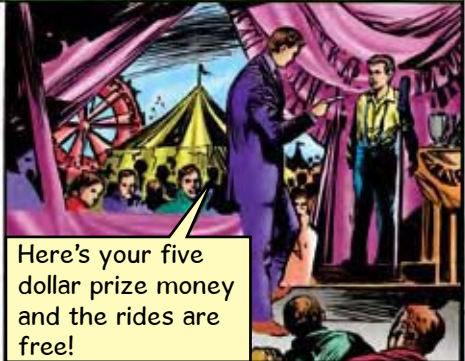
Vernon Presley worked whenever he could—sharecropping, driving a milk truck, or sorting lumber.



Gladys taught her son to be polite and kind. She took him everywhere she went. Vernon taught him to defend himself against bullies.



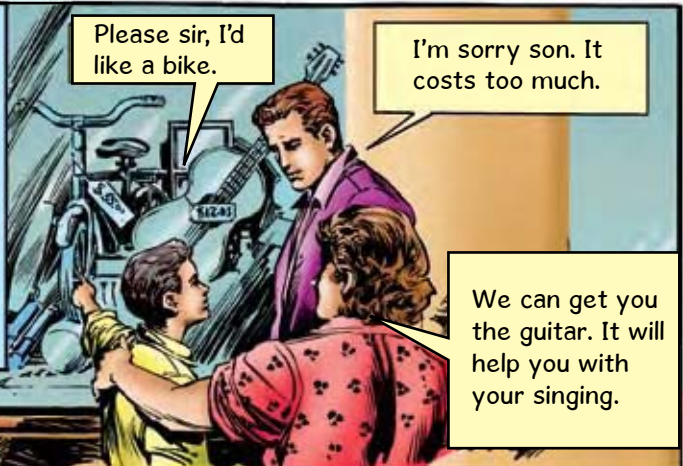
I like to see the minister shout, clap his hands, and get excited!



Here's your five dollar prize money and the rides are free!

When Elvis was ten, his school principal took him to the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show. Elvis won second prize for singing "Old Shep."

Elvis listened to the popular country music and the blues singers on the radio. He copied the sounds. He never did learn to read music, but he had a good ear for it.



Please sir, I'd like a bike.

I'm sorry son. It costs too much.

We can get you the guitar. It will help you with your singing.

First they lived in a one room apartment. Later they moved to a two bedroom apartment in a low cost housing development.



Well, there's no work here. Let's hope Memphis, Tennessee, will be better.

Vernon got a job packing paint cans starting at 83 cents an hour. Gladys sometimes worked in a curtain factory.

The high school Elvis attended had 1,600 students, more than the whole population of East Tupelo. He made some good friends. He liked football, ROTC, and shop.



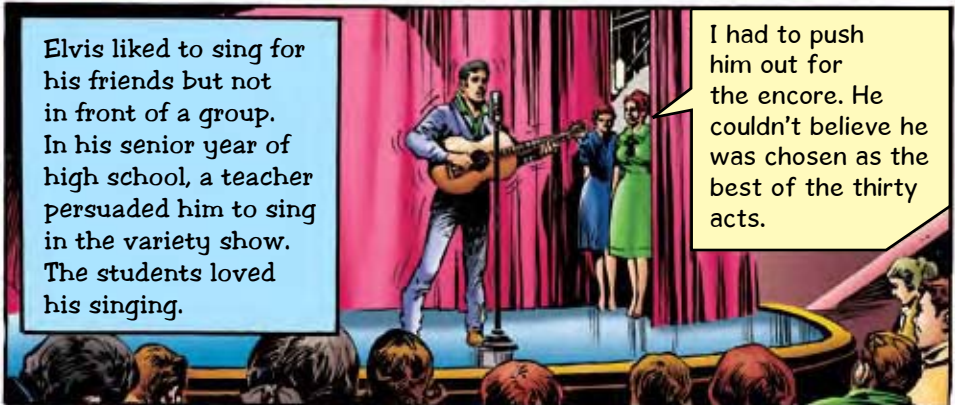
Elvis sure loves football. He's good too!



The boys make fun of your hair and loud clothes, Elvis.

That doesn't bother me. They make me look older.

Elvis liked to sing for his friends but not in front of a group. In his senior year of high school, a teacher persuaded him to sing in the variety show. The students loved his singing.



I had to push him out for the encore. He couldn't believe he was chosen as the best of the thirty acts.

During high school Elvis had a few jobs. But his parents felt they interfered with his studying. Even though money was scarce, his parents always managed to give him spending money.

I like this job. I can listen to the radio. I like working, and I like to listen to music.

After high school Elvis got a job driving a truck. He made \$1.25 an hour. At night he attended school to become an electrician.

You're lucky. The employment agency said you were a nice boy and not to be fooled by your long hair. The men here tease you because they like you. Remember the time they sent you to look for "sky hooks."

Then you said don't let them fool you. There is no such thing. I like them too!

Ma'am, I'd like to make a record for my mother.

In 1953 Elvis Presley paid \$4 to the Memphis Recording Service to make a record for his mother. He sang "My Happiness" and a sad ballad called "That's When Your Heartache Begins."

Once that boy started to sing, I knew you should hear him, Sam. So I taped the rest.

Yes, he's different. But he needs work.



Elvis came back to make a second record.

Sam introduced Elvis to Scotty Moore, a guitar player, and Bill Black, a bass player. They worked together for months, trying to find a style of music they liked.

What the devil are you doing!



I think we have got something.

Sam took the group's first record to Dewey Phillips, a disc jockey for radio station WHBQ. Listeners began calling in asking to have the record played over and over.

I've played that record fourteen times! In a row!



Elvis turned on the radio for his parents. Then he went to a movie, too nervous to listen.



That recording by Elvis, Scotty, and Bill was historic. To "That's All Right (Mama)," the blues song, they gave a country sound.

On the other side of the single, to bluegrass hit "Blue Moon of Kentucky," Elvis sang the blues. It was the first time that country music and blues were mixed. The form later was called "rockabilly."

To perform in Nashville's Grand Ole Opry was the hope of all country and western singers. Elvis made it after his first record. But ...

Son, I suggest you go back to truck driving.



Elvis was so upset that he left a suitcase full of clothes behind.

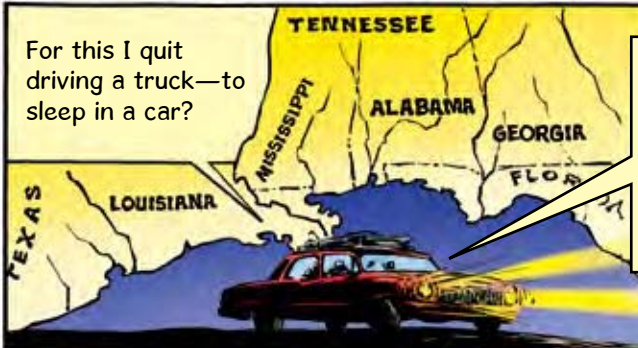
In October 1954 the second radio booking was with the Louisiana Hayride. It was more successful.



He's great. We'll give him a year's contract.

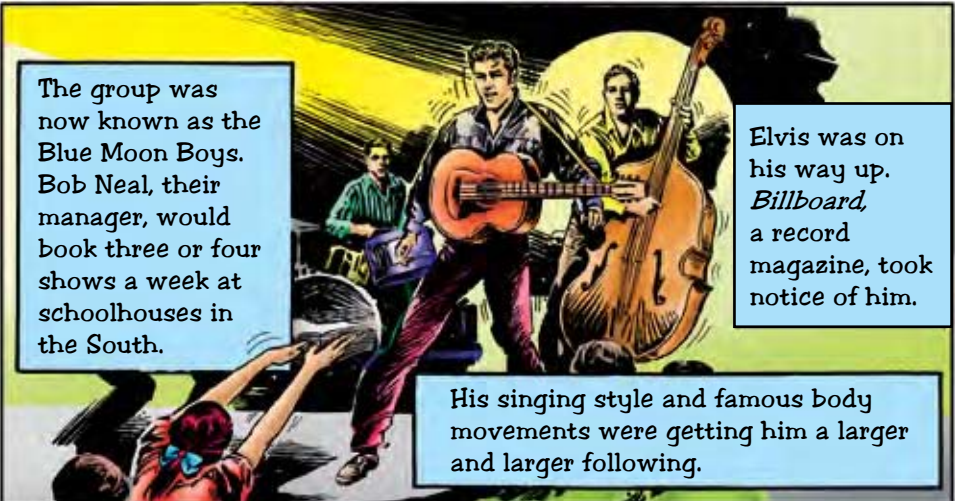
The 3,500 seat auditorium was always filled on the Saturday nights Elvis was to appear.

For this I quit driving a truck—to sleep in a car?



Well, you and Bill don't own cars. Let's just hope this doesn't wear out before my wife finishes paying for it.

The group was now known as the Blue Moon Boys. Bob Neal, their manager, would book three or four shows a week at schoolhouses in the South.



Elvis was on his way up. *Billboard*, a record magazine, took notice of him.

His singing style and famous body movements were getting him a larger and larger following.

The Colonel

In 1955 Colonel Tom Parker was something of a legend. Maybe Elvis Presley would not have become a legend if it hadn't been for this showman.

Tom Parker was born in 1910 of carnival folks.

How's business, Tom?

Full house, I'm doing fine!

At seventeen, he had his own pony and monkey act.

Later he traveled with other carnivals and shows doing all kinds of work.

Here you are folks. Beautiful canaries!

He became a super salesman but sometimes not an honest one. Once he painted sparrows yellow and sold them as canaries. He cut hot dogs in half put each half at the end of the bun and relish in the middle. Then he sold them as "foot long hot dogs."

He became a press agent for carnivals, circuses, and showboats. Later he became manager for country singers Eddy Arnold and Hank Snow. He put together country shows with singers, musicians, and comedians.

O.K. Plug in the hot plate.

Colonel Parker always had chickens in a cage as a "livestock exhibit" so he wouldn't have to pay a tax for his show.

Once, when Eddy Arnold couldn't sing, the colonel brought out his "dancing chickens." He had put a hot plate under the straw, and the poor chickens stepped lively when the electricity was put on.

By late 1955 Elvis, with his hit records and appearances, was making \$2,000 a week. He bought a pink Cadillac and a \$40,000 Memphis home for his parents.

That boy interests me. I'll help you with his bookings.



Colonel Parker met Elvis when he appeared on the *Hank Snow Jamboree*. Hank Snow was the leading country singer and was handled by the Colonel.

With your help, I can be of assistance to your son.



In order to become Elvis' personal manager, the Colonel became friends with Vernon and Gladys Presley.

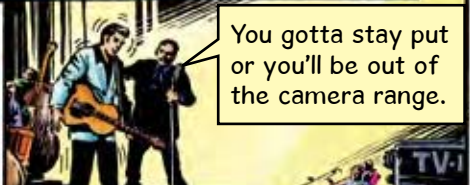
In November 1955 Elvis' manager, Bob Neal, agreed to let the Colonel take over Elvis' career.

1956 became the Year of Elvis Presley. Under the Colonel's guidance, his career skyrocketed. He appeared on TV.



He received \$1,250 for the *Dorsey Brothers Stage Show*. He did five more with them. TV audiences had never seen anything like Elvis before.

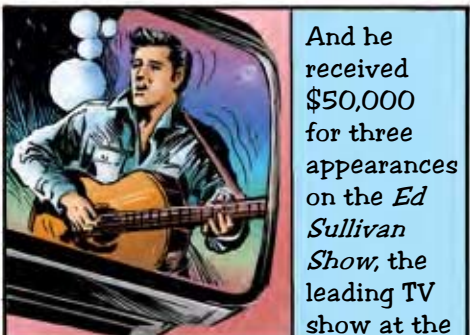
You gotta stay put or you'll be out of the camera range.



He appeared twice with Milton Berle and got \$5,000 for each show.



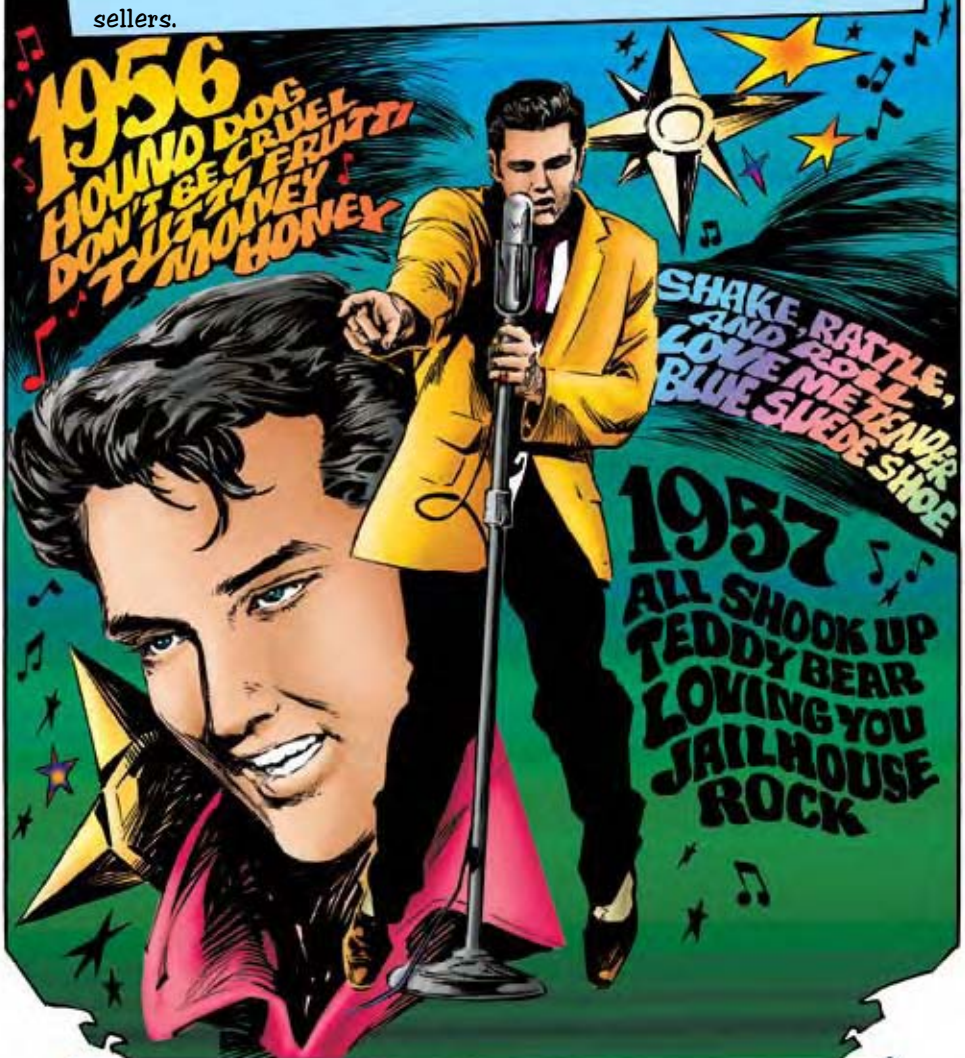
During the summer he appeared on the *Steve Allen Show* for \$7,500. He wore a tuxedo and stood still for his song. The fans were upset.



And he received \$50,000 for three appearances on the *Ed Sullivan Show*, the leading TV show at the time. But because of the uproar his wild movements had caused, Elvis was shown on the TV screen only from the waist up.

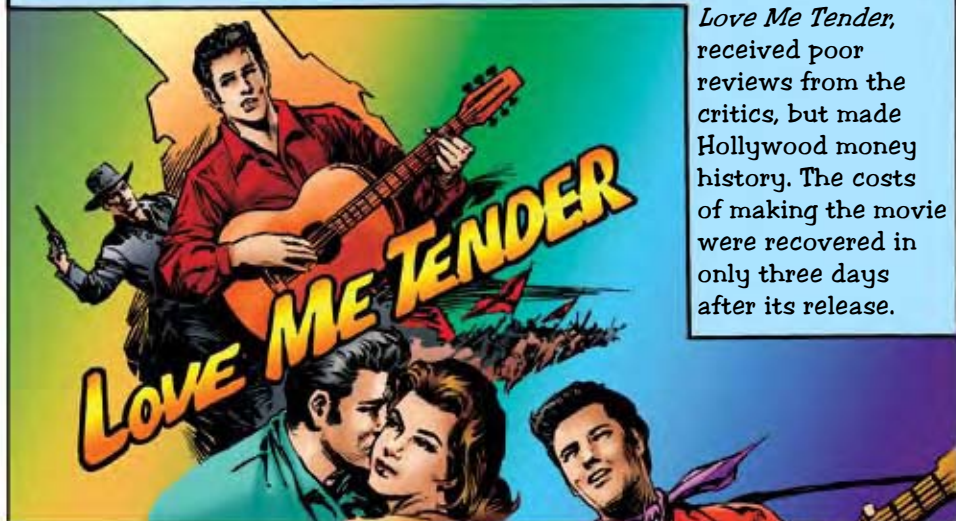
The Colonel made a deal with RCA Records. They bought Sam Phillips' contract for \$35,000—giving a \$5,000 bonus to Elvis.

Beginning with "Heartbreak Hotel," one after another of Elvis' records became number one on the charts and were million record sellers.



Popular music was never the same again. In the 1950s, Elvis earned more gold records than other stars did in their entire careers.

Colonel Parker made a deal with Twentieth Century Fox for Elvis to make three movies for \$450,000.



Elvis' first movie, *Love Me Tender*, received poor reviews from the critics, but made Hollywood money history. The costs of making the movie were recovered in only three days after its release.



LOVING YOU

**Jailhouse
Rock**

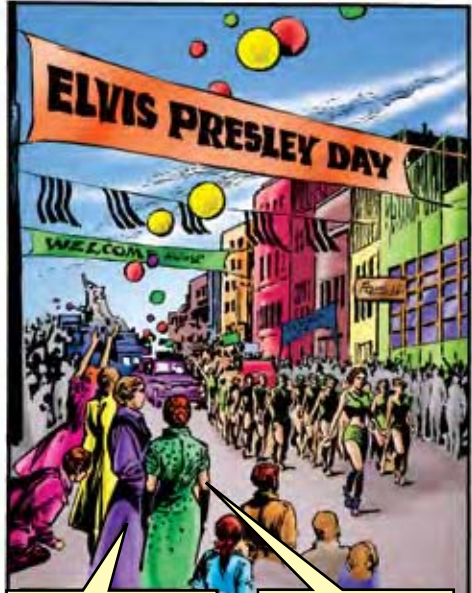
The next two pictures were also box office hits. His fans were multiplying by the thousands.

After finishing the movie, *Love Me Tender* in 1956, the Colonel booked Elvis for a cross-country singing tour. He hit the big cities this time—and made as much as \$25,000 a night. In 1957 when not making movies, he also toured the country singing.

He still gets stage fright before every performance.



Everywhere he went he was met by screaming crowds, mostly teenage girls.



One thing Elvis learned from his mother was to always be polite and kind!

And generous! He's giving his check for this show back to Tupelo.

Ten years after winning second prize for singing "Old Shep" at the Mississippi-Alabama Fair and Dairy Show, Elvis returned.

Here you are, ladies and gentlemen. Get your picture of Elvis. Only 50 cents.



Not only did the Colonel sell pictures of Elvis at the concerts, he started an Elvis Presley industry. Every item sold brought in more money for Elvis and the Colonel. There were T-shirts, sneakers, and other types of clothing, charm bracelets, stuffed hound dogs, teddy bears, lipsticks, paper dolls, and coloring books. Plus pictures, posters, and buttons. New items appeared all the time.

In 1956 Elvis probably made as much as ten million dollars. And 1957 was a big year too!



In 1957 he bought Graceland, a thirteen acre estate just outside Memphis. It had twenty-three rooms. He had a swimming pool put in and a fun room. He also had a pool table, soda fountain, movie projector, and two televisions. He bought clothes, jewelry, and cars—Lincolns, Cadillacs, Rolls Royces, buses, trucks, and motorcycles.

You sing that church music beautifully. I've always loved it.



Elvis loved his mother and father. They lived with him at Graceland. So did his grandmother, an aunt, two uncles, and the "Memphis Mafia."

Elvis couldn't appear in public without being mobbed by teenage girls. So he had a group of close friends who were bodyguards and companions.



Why do they call you the "Memphis Mafia?"

Oh, some newspaper gave us that tag, and it stuck. We're on Elvis' payroll—take care of his bills, clothes, travel—stuff like that. And keep his fans from tearing him apart.

The only outside entertainment he had was when he rented an amusement park, roller skating rink, or movie house for the night. He and the group would invite their friends to join in the fun.

The Army

At 6:35 a.m. on March 24, 1958, Elvis, his parents, and a few friends arrived at the Memphis Local Draft Board. Elvis Presley had been drafted into the army.

Elvis may be in the army—but he won't be forgotten. His new movie *King Creole* will soon be out.

Also present were the press and the Colonel with balloons advertising Elvis' new movie, *King Creole*.



The bus taking the recruits to Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, stopped at a restaurant. Dozens of fans stormed the place, tearing Elvis' clothes.

He sat in this chair, and I waited on him.

I don't care. I grabbed it first.



Do you know how much we could get selling that hair to fans?



Hair today, gone tomorrow.

At Fort Chaffee they allowed Colonel Parker to bring in the press to follow Elvis around for several days.

Elvis was sent to Fort Hood, Texas, for basic combat training.

He received over two thousand letters this week. But Private Presley is here to become a soldier!



The information officer, a WAC lieutenant, firmly told the reporters that they could no longer come on post to see him.

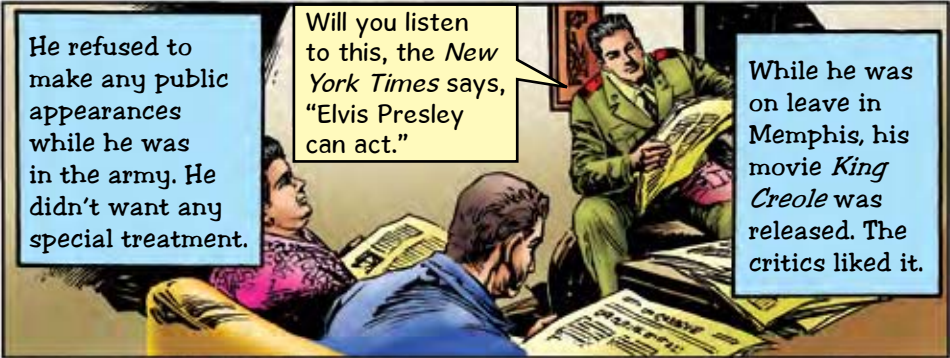
By the right March, march, march, wiggle.



On the weekends Elvis had to dodge his fans. He laughed at the teasing he got from his fellow soldiers.

He refused to make any public appearances while he was in the army. He didn't want any special treatment.

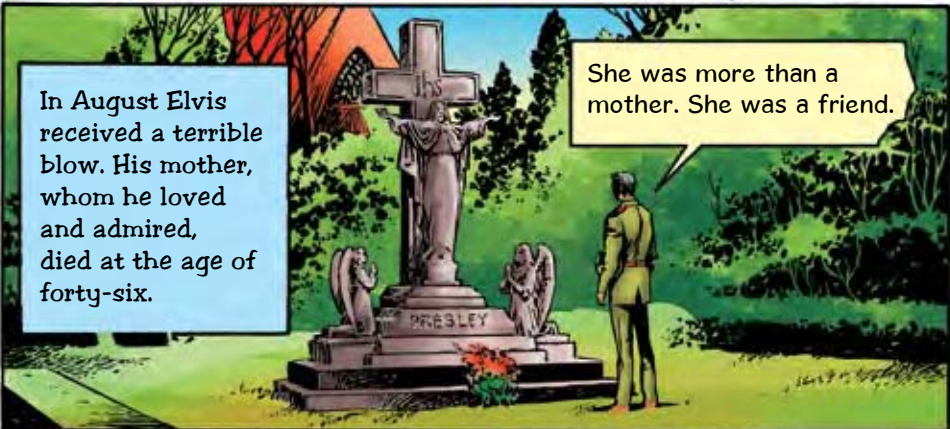
Will you listen to this, the *New York Times* says, "Elvis Presley can act."



While he was on leave in Memphis, his movie *King Creole* was released. The critics liked it.

In August Elvis received a terrible blow. His mother, whom he loved and admired, died at the age of forty-six.

She was more than a mother. She was a friend.



At the end of September 1958 the army shipped Elvis to Germany. He was sent to Friedberg, near Frankfurt.

Rock and roll is the biggest youth movement in Germany right now.

Hundreds of German teenage fans were kept away from Elvis.

Rent is \$800 a month. You pay for repairs needed.

Stories in the papers told of his "castle." But Elvis lived off post in a plain house with his father and grandmother.

You'll need to read maps, draw sketches, and recognize the enemy.

Elvis earned the respect of his outfit. They felt he was a regular fellow and tried to protect him from his fans.

I hear the communists in East Germany have arrested a "gang." It's called "The Elvis Presley Hound Dogs."

Elvis differed from the other GIs when it came to mail call. He received as many as 10,000 letters a week. Most of them were sent on to the Colonel.

Elvis and his father Vernon met their future wives in Germany: Priscilla Beaulieu and Davada (Dee) Stanley. Priscilla, the daughter of an air force captain stationed in Germany, was fourteen when Elvis met her.

Sergeant Elvis Presley was honorably discharged from the army in March 1960. He flew from Germany to McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey. He arrived at 6:35 a.m. in a blinding snowstorm. He was greeted by hundreds of fans, the press, the Colonel, and friends.

I understand you received a Certificate of Achievement for faithful duty and service.

Frank Sinatra's daughter Nancy presented him with a gift of dress shirts from her father.



While he was in the army there were many takeoffs of Elvis and his style.



On a TV show, Phil Silvers sang "You're Nothing but A Raccoon," and "Brown Suede Combat Boots."



Bye Bye Birdie, a Broadway show about a rock 'n' roll singer named Birdie, ran for two years.

The Colonel had made sure that Elvis' name had remained well known.

Elvis made two million dollars in 1958 and even more in 1959.



Up and Down and Up Again

Out of the army, Elvis' career again went into high gear—but with some changes. There were no more sideburns and no hard rock music. A more mature Elvis sang romantic ballads.



The whole way from Memphis, twenty-four hours a day, the fans have been lining the tracks.

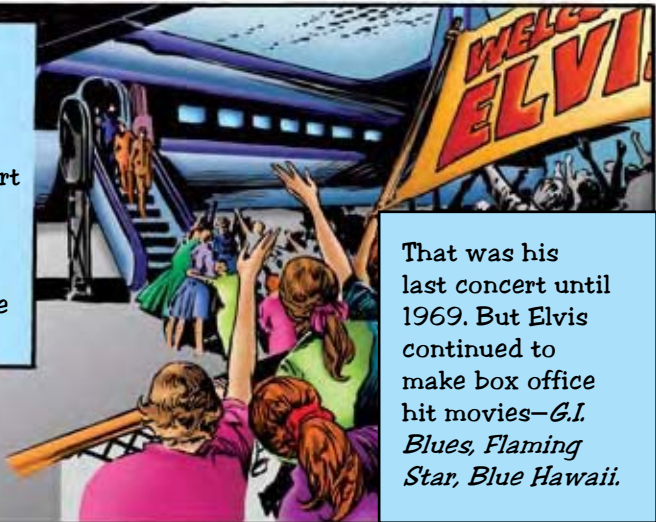
Elvis stopped for a few days at Graceland, his old home. Then he left by train for Miami Beach to do a TV special with Frank Sinatra.



We have here the idols of two generations. Man, that's history.

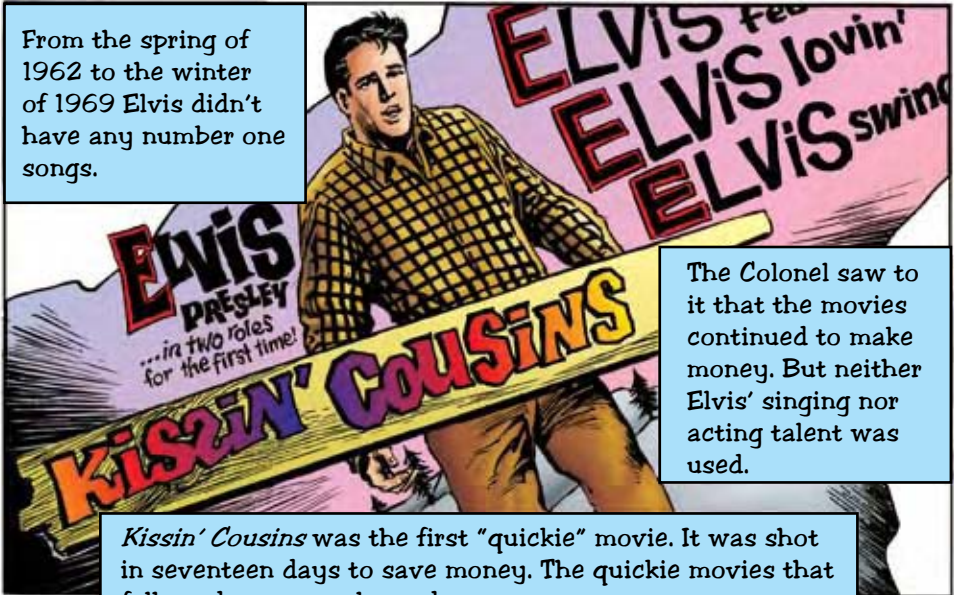
Elvis received \$125,000 for a six minute guest shot on the Sinatra special.

In 1961 Elvis gave two sellout benefit performances in Memphis and one in Hawaii. Jimmy Stewart and Minnie Pearl had been on the plane too, but the 25,000 fans were there to see Elvis.



That was his last concert until 1969. But Elvis continued to make box office hit movies—*G.I. Blues*, *Flaming Star*, *Blue Hawaii*.

From the spring of 1962 to the winter of 1969 Elvis didn't have any number one songs.



The Colonel saw to it that the movies continued to make money. But neither Elvis' singing nor acting talent was used.

Kissin' Cousins was the first "quickie" movie. It was shot in seventeen days to save money. The quickie movies that followed were poorly made.

Because he could never appear in public without being mobbed, Elvis kept his Memphis Mafia for protection and companionship. They were old friends from his youth and a few army buddies.

How many young men does Elvis have on his staff?

Sometimes seven, sometimes as many as twelve.

They played football, swam, rode motorcycles. His friends said he was polite, generous, and full of fun.

How do you really feel about Elvis?

We love him like a big brother. We try to keep him happy—even when he loses his temper. He feels down sometimes, but we understand.



In 1960 Priscilla Beaulieu flew over from Germany to spend Christmas with Elvis, his father Vernon, and his stepmother Dee.



I sure like this better than last year in the army. And Dee, I'm real glad Dad married you.

At her father's request, Priscilla stayed at Graceland with Vernon, Dee, Elvis' grandmother, and aunt.



Priscilla finished high school in 1963 and then went on to study modeling.

You see before you, the true Hollywood boy.

Ha Ha.

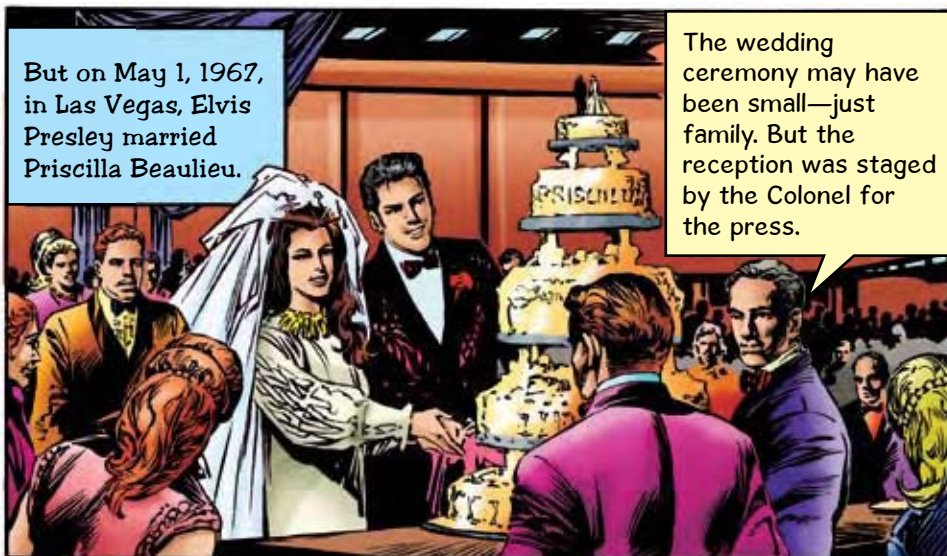


Elvis spent most of his time in Hollywood making movies.



For years the newspaper gossip columns and movie magazines linked Elvis' name with one starlet after another.

But on May 1, 1967, in Las Vegas, Elvis Presley married Priscilla Beaulieu.



Elvis and Priscilla, without the Memphis Mafia, spent much of their time at Circle G, a 163-acre ranch near Graceland.



Their daughter, Lisa Marie, was born February 1, 1968. Elvis was never happier.

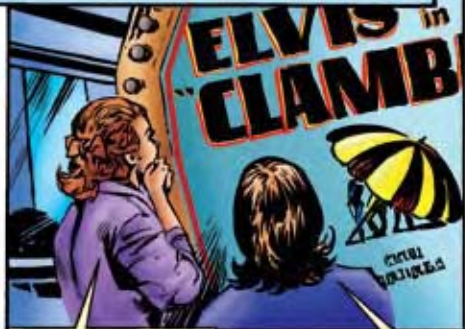


But Elvis couldn't settle down to married life. Priscilla, with Lisa Marie, left him in 1972—and the Memphis Mafia, his friends, moved back in.

Elvis made no public appearances from 1962 to mid 1969. Many of his fans switched to the younger stars: Bob Dylan, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Jefferson Airplane.

I'm still loyal to Elvis!

Well, I'm a fan of the Beatles.

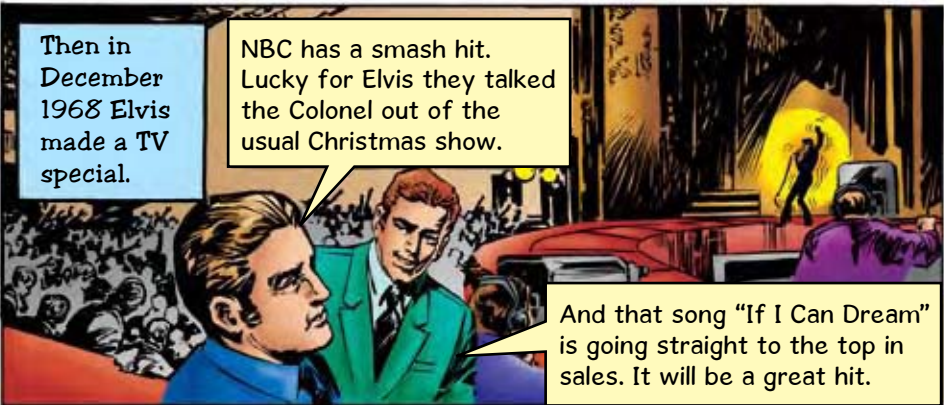


Gosh, isn't he wonderful?

I'm getting tired of his movies. They're all alike.

Then in December 1968 Elvis made a TV special.

NBC has a smash hit. Lucky for Elvis they talked the Colonel out of the usual Christmas show.



And that song "If I Can Dream" is going straight to the top in sales. It will be a great hit.

In July 1969 Elvis appeared in person at the International Hotel in Las Vegas. Fans came from all over the world to see him. He was again on top.

I came from England.

I came from even further, from Australia.



From then on Elvis appeared in Las Vegas for one month in the winter and one month in the summer—for one million dollars a month. He appeared at the Houston Astrodome for one million dollars a show.

His appearances in the '70s in Las Vegas, the Houston Astrodome, and Madison Square Garden in New York were sellouts. But Elvis was beginning to have problems.

He gave Priscilla a big settlement.



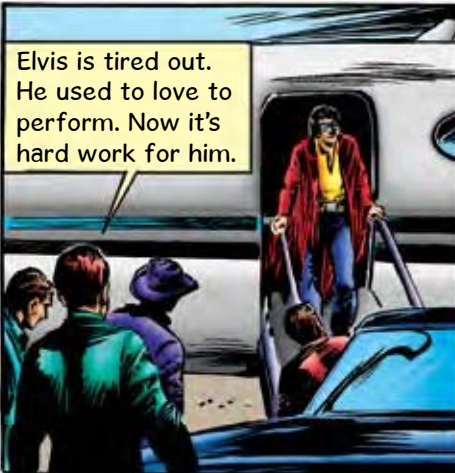
In 1973 Elvis and Priscilla were divorced.

His hair is gray now. He dyes it black.

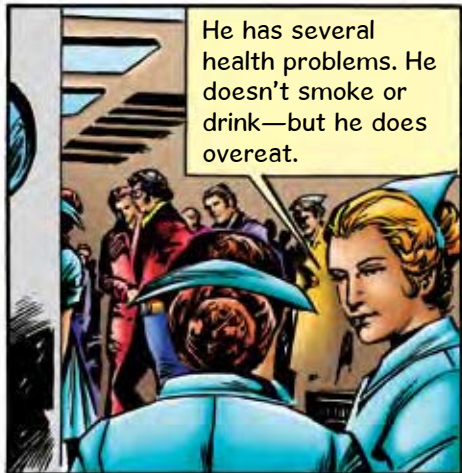


Elvis had a weight problem. He was getting fat. Sometimes he wouldn't allow any pictures to be taken of him.

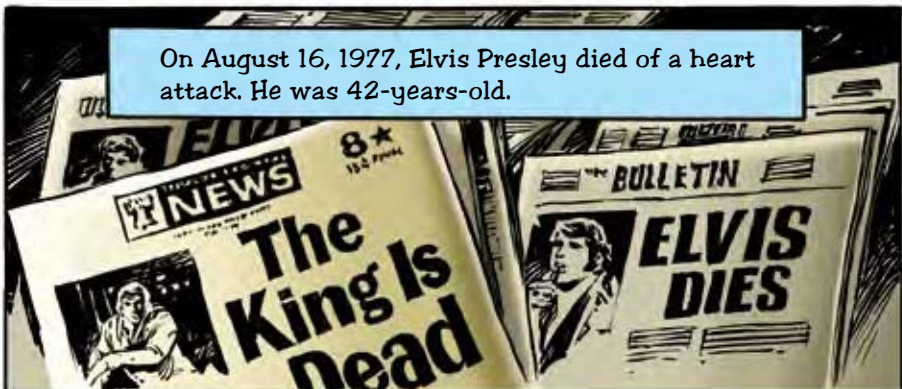
Elvis is tired out. He used to love to perform. Now it's hard work for him.



He has several health problems. He doesn't smoke or drink—but he does overeat.



On August 16, 1977, Elvis Presley died of a heart attack. He was 42-years-old.



The Legend

Something is wrong. Every time I open an engagement Elvis sends me a guitar made of flowers. It hasn't come.



Ann-Margret made a movie with Elvis. They remained friends. When hearing of his death, she talked about him during her Las Vegas performance.

We lost a good friend today.



Sinatra dedicated his concert to Elvis. Many other stars of stage and screen paid tribute to him.

Memphis lowered its flags to half-mast. Phone calls came in from all over the world, more than the system could handle.

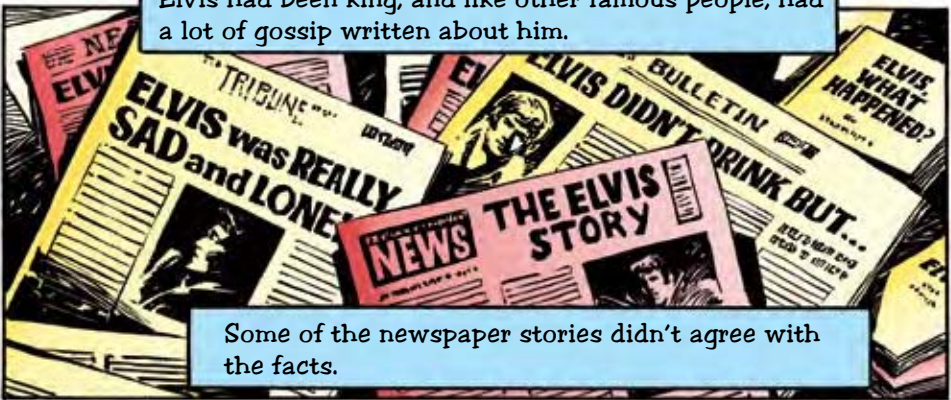


President Carter praised Elvis as a symbol of the country's vitality, rebelliousness, and good humor.



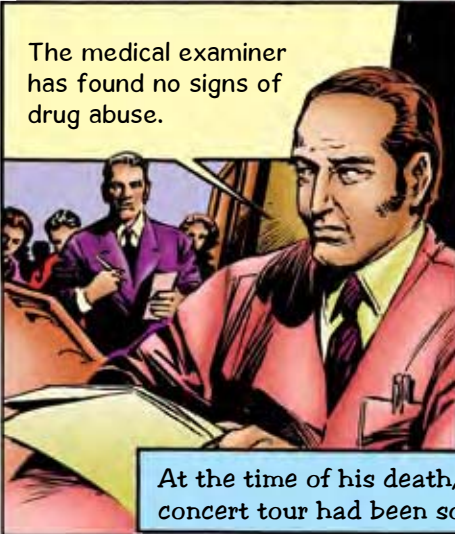
And over 100,000 fans went to Graceland to pay tribute. The country mourned his loss.

Elvis had been king, and like other famous people, had a lot of gossip written about him.



Some of the newspaper stories didn't agree with the facts.

The medical examiner has found no signs of drug abuse.

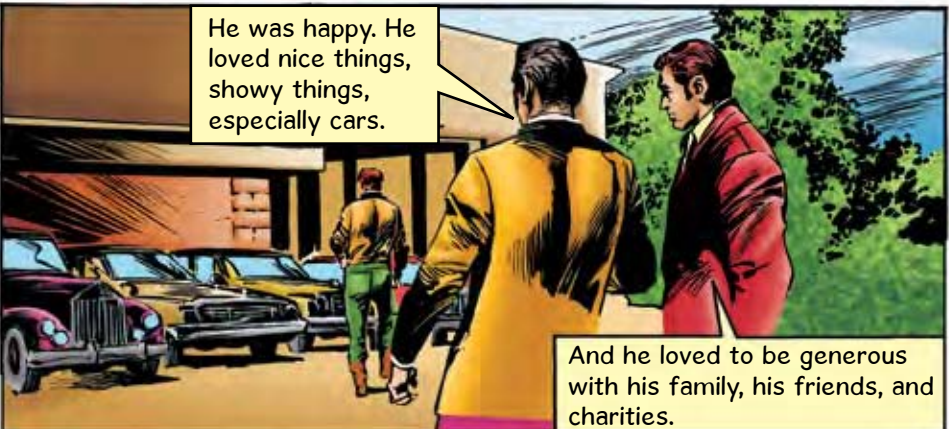


He was engaged to the lovely Ginger Alden. He was happy.



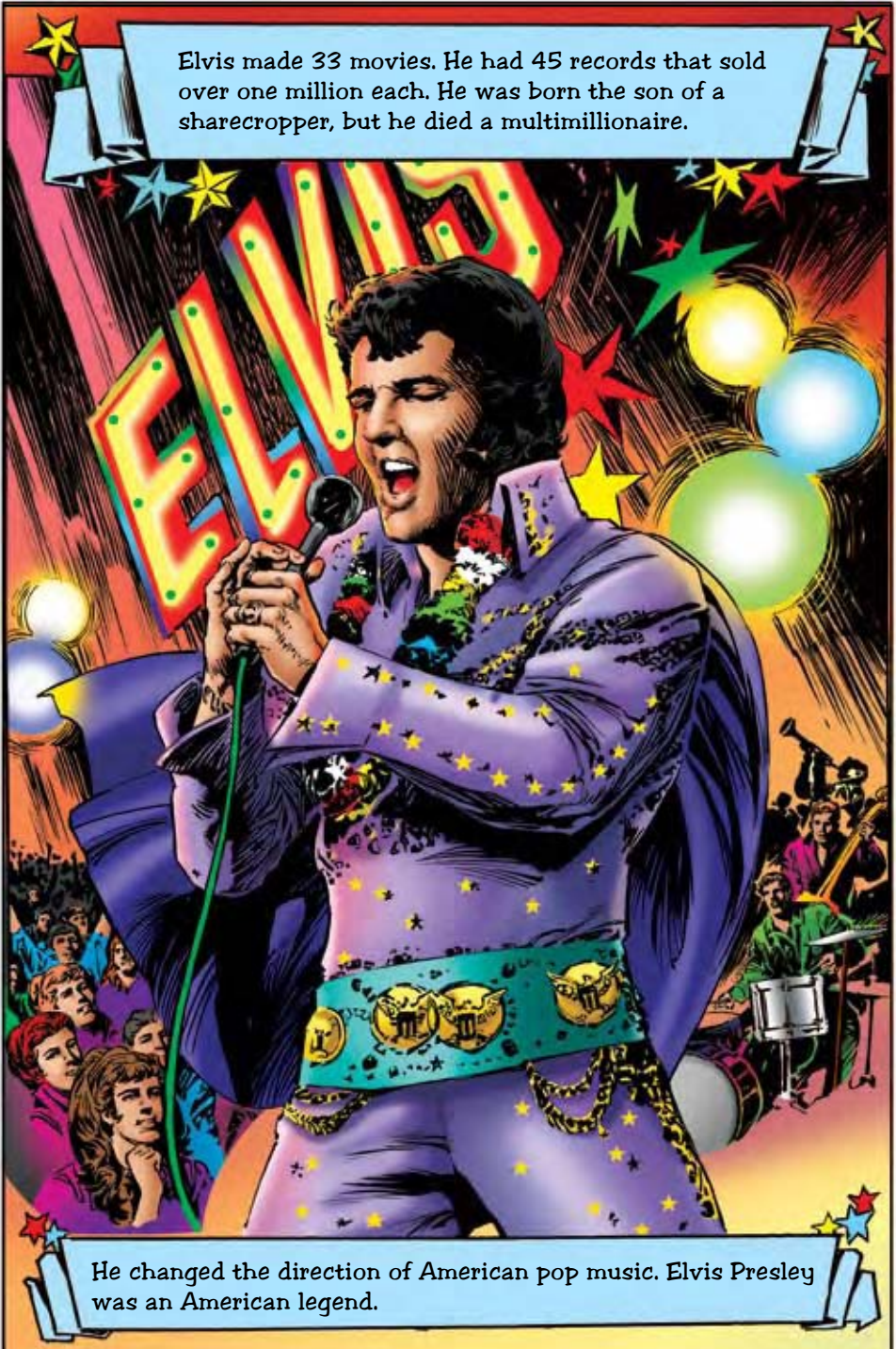
At the time of his death, Elvis had a hit record. His current concert tour had been sold out.

He was happy. He loved nice things, showy things, especially cars.



And he loved to be generous with his family, his friends, and charities.

Elvis made 33 movies. He had 45 records that sold over one million each. He was born the son of a sharecropper, but he died a multimillionaire.



He changed the direction of American pop music. Elvis Presley was an American legend.



— TITLES IN THIS SERIES —

The Beatles
Alexander Graham Bell
Daniel Boone
Davy Crockett
Marie Curie
Walt Disney
Amelia Earhart
Thomas Edison
Albert Einstein
Benjamin Franklin
Houdini
Thomas Jefferson
Martin Luther King Jr.
Abraham Lincoln
Charles Lindbergh
Elvis Presley
Jackie Robinson
Franklin D. Roosevelt
Babe Ruth
George Washington